

EVALUATION PLAN

It is the goal of the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) to incorporate Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE) processes and tools into the evaluation of its programs.

In *New Directives, New Directions: Documenting Outcomes in IMLS Grants To Libraries*, the IMLS states that it “must document results of grant activities in order to be accountable to Congress and to meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. Therefore, it is very important for IMLS to show how its funding programs achieve the agency’s mission. All grantees are required to provide final reports (and in many cases interim reports) describing their grant activities.” Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE) is the preferred process by the IMLS for program evaluation.

In 2000, several OLIS staff members participated in outcome-based evaluation training at IMLS offices in Washington, DC. In October 2001, IMLS sponsored a 1.5-day OBE training program in RI for LORI library staff.

Requirements for outcome-based evaluation in statewide and sub-grant programs

Statewide programs will be evaluated by the participants to measure outcomes.

Grants will be evaluated using a combination of outcome and output evaluation techniques as determined by the specific program or project. All prospective grant recipients will be asked to include evaluation techniques in their proposals. Evaluation will include a determination of the results of the actual implementation of the project in relation to its objectives, impact on the targeted group, and accomplishment of anticipated outcomes. OLIS will employ OBE methods wherever practicable. Grant recipients will be asked to supply “success stories” wherever possible to “put a human face” on their projects.

OLIS Library Programs staff have already developed plans to incorporate Outcome-Based Evaluation methods in evaluating the *Mother Goose Asks “Why?”* Program (a statewide early childhood literacy program coordinated by OLIS.) Pre- and post-survey forms given to parents/providers along with anecdotal records kept by facilitators will be used to measure changes in attitudes and behavior in relation to reading aloud, participation in book related learning activities, and library use. A VISTA assistant will conduct follow-up phone surveys to measure attitudes and behavior some time after completion of the training.

Additional strategies for Implementation

1. Attend advanced OBE training at COSLINE CE meeting (2003)
2. Identify other OLIS statewide and sub-grant programs that meet the criteria for outcome-based evaluation (2003)
3. Develop outcome-based evaluation tools and processes for OLIS statewide and sub-grant programs that meet the criteria for outcome-based evaluation (2003-2004)
4. Implement outcome-based evaluation processes in identified statewide and sub-grant programs (2004-2007)

Evaluation of Five-Year Plan

OLIS will survey the libraries and other stakeholders at least yearly regarding the efficacy of the plan and its priorities. Other methods of gaining input will be considered, including continuation of an online forum.

By the end of the fourth year, OLIS will engage an evaluation consultant to conduct an overall evaluation of the agency's implementation of the plan and the results. This evaluation will also be designed to provide a needs assessment for the next long-range plan. Focus groups, surveys and other methods that reach both the library community, library users and non-users will be used.